

Members

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Sen. Connie Sipes
Rep. Mary Kay Budak
Rep. William Crawford
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Mary Jane Scamahorn
Kimberly Armstrong
Mark Young
Susan Tucker
Mara Snyder
Anne Valentine
Melanie Brizzi
Becky Dennis
Sharon Molargik
Ann Stefaniak
Tonette Murff
Bonnie Miller



COMMITTEE ON CHILD CARE

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Authority: P.L. 107-2005

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 31, 2006
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 431
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 3

Members Present: Sen. Connie Lawson, Chairperson; Rep. Mary Kay Budak; Pam Leffers; Mary Jane Scamahorn; Mark Young; Susan Tucker; Melanie Brizzi; Becky Dennis; Sharon Molargik; Bonnie Miller.

Members Absent: Sen. Connie Sipes; Rep. William Crawford; Kimberly Armstrong; Mara Snyder; Anne Valentine; Ann Stefaniak; Tonette Murff.

Sen. Lawson called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

Preschools in Public Schools

Michael Conn-Powers, Director, Early Childhood Center, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, provided a summary of his testimony². Mr. Conn-Powers noted that there is currently no specific Indiana policy definition of "preschool" or "prekindergarten", but noted

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

² Attachment 1.

that "prekindergarten" typically refers to a group learning experience for three to four year olds with an educational focus for at least two days per week. He noted that achievement gaps exist among groups of children and that addressing these gaps with preschool education is more effective than waiting until children reach first grade. He then referred to seven elements, gleaned from a literature search and noted in his written summary, of a high quality prekindergarten program, and explained that determining the quality elements that should be common to both preschool and child care depends on the defined purpose of each. Mr. Conn-Powers stated that the Institute will soon perform an extensive survey of prekindergarten programs at all public schools in Indiana to determine the prevalence of prekindergarten in Indiana, where preschools are located, and the type of preschool programs that are provided.

In response to questions from Rep. Budak, Sen. Lawson, Ms. Molargik, and Ms. Leffers, Mr. Conn-Powers stated that: (1) there is currently no monitoring of preschools to determine whether they are providing preschool education or child care, but that voluntary accreditation status of programs may provide some assistance in making such a determination; (2) some public school systems contract with Head Start or other community preschool programs to provide preschool; (3) the Institute's survey will reflect whether preschool programs are Head Start programs; (4) many child care providers provide not only basic child care, but also preschool programs, and may provide a better "preschool" experience than some preschool programs.

Jayma Ferguson McGann, Director, Division of Prime Time, Indiana Department of Education, provided two documents³ concerning non-regulatory guidance for Title I funding for preschool and Indiana regulatory requirements that apply to preschools. Ms. McGann explained the history of public schools providing preschool programs and noted that while some pilot programs resulted in continuation of the preschool programs following the pilots' expirations, others ceased to exist. She stated that most of those that continued did so due to the need for preschool programs for special needs children.

In response to questions from Rep. Budak, Ms. McGann stated that: (1) there are no regulatory requirements concerning child/staff ratios or class size for preschools in Indiana; (2) the only regulatory requirement related to ratios or class size is the requirement that each student, preschool through grade 12, has 30 square feet of space at school; (3) there is no requirement specific to preschools other than the manner in which a preschool is established in a public school; (4) most public preschools have a licensed teacher, which is not required; (5) many school districts that do not have space for preschools partner with child care centers by sending a licensed teacher to the child care centers to provide prekindergarten educational programs at the child care centers; (6) the legal definition of "preschool" in Indiana is vague, specifying that it refers to children who are aged three years or older in a school readiness program. There was general discussion concerning the child care licensure exemptions for preschools located in public and private schools and preschools located in other settings.

Denna Renbarger, Principal, Early Childhood Centers, M.S.D. Lawrence Township, provided a history of the preschool programs in Lawrence Township schools, noting that the preschool programs began as a "preschool for the arts" five years ago with twenty students, and now have more than 400 students at four locations. She explained that various parties with an interest in young children, including child care providers, preschool providers, parents, etc. were involved in discussions concerning the preschools from the beginning and that the community determined that these preschools were desired in the

³Attachment 2.

school district to provide another choice for parents. She stated that child care and preschool are now provided separately at the 4 locations and that they follow accreditation standards.

In response to questions from Sen. Lawson, Ms. Leffers, and Ms. Dennis, Ms. Renbarger stated that: (1) they are working toward licensure, but different, essentially conflicting, regulatory requirements cause compliance difficulties; (2) they will receive Child Care and Development Fund vouchers; (3) they do not receive public school subsidies except for children with special needs; (4) there is an average of approximately four children who are special needs children in a class of twelve children; and (5) the preschool of the arts is influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to preschool and designed in accordance with the Indiana academic standards. Ms. Renbarger extended an invitation to the members to tour the Lawrence Township preschools.

Followup to October 10, 2006, testimony

Sen. Lawson noted the written information⁴ provided to committee from the Stein Group following up on the testimony at the Committee's October 10, 2006, meeting concerning the "Economic Dimensions of Child Care" report.

Consideration of Proposed Legislation

Sen. Lawson described the contents of PD 3511⁵, explaining the difference in membership and duties of the new Committee on Child Care, and the establishment of child care advisory committees by the Division of Family Resources (DFR). Ms. Brizzi commented on the new structure, emphasizing the more direct contact of child care providers with the DFR through the advisory committees. Ms. Scammahorn commented that the membership of the new Committee on Child Care contained in PD 3511 might allow for more to be accomplished by the Committee. Ms. Leffers approved of the new structure and noted that some issues addressed by the Committee in the past may be more appropriately addressed through the new structure. There was general discussion concerning the PD, including amendments to the language.

PD 3511, as amended, was approved by unanimous voice vote for introduction during the 2007 session of the General Assembly.

Consideration of Final Report

Sen. Lawson described the contents of the draft final report⁶. She read each finding and recommendation contained in the draft final report and the members commented and suggested various changes and additions to the report.

Following several amendments, the amended final report was approved by unanimous voice vote.

⁴Attachment 3.

⁵Attachment 4.

⁶Attachment 5.

Other Business

Sen. Lawson noted that this would be Rep. Budak's final meeting and thanked Rep. Budak for her many years of work to help Indiana children.

With no further business to discuss, Sen. Lawson adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.